



PLATINUM SERIES



Select, Ultra Premium, Collectable Wines from California's Best Winemakers

The term *pioneer* is rarely applied to many modern day circumstances, with good reason. When *pioneer* relates specifically to the wine industry, the idiom infrequently appears. Such is not the case with Robert Ashley Young, founder of Robert Young Estate Winery, this month's *Platinum Series* selection.

To adequately describe the Robert Young Estate Winery, it is necessary to go back four generations, to the time when Peter Young left upstate New York to seek his fortune in California's gold fields of the 1840's. Young liked what he saw and decided to remain in California, settling around Healdsburg in Sonoma County. Peter's son, Silas Henry Young, also became a farmer and later fathered Robert Ashley Young, who eventually presided over a large and productive prune operation on the family's rich lands in Sonoma County.

Sometime in 1963, Robert Young decided to make the jump into premium varietal wine grapes, and in particular, Cabernet Sauvignon. Young turned out to be a most innovative farmer and his grapes soon became the premier fruit grown in the area. In 1975, another outstanding young winemaker talent named Richard Arrowood at Chateau St. Jean made Young's grapes famous by making Robert Young's Chardonnay the first vineyard-designated wine produced in the United States.

The story then fast-forwards to the present time, 1997 to be exact, when Robert Young's sons and daughters take the advice of their peers and decide to open their own winery.

"It was our family's way of expanding our operation without having to buy any more additional property to grow grapes," explained Susan Young, who now serves as the winery's Director of Events and unofficial historian. "We had been growing grapes for over 40 years and just decided to head in a slightly different direction."

In order to do that, the Young Family had to secure permission from Chateau St. Jean to use the Robert Young name since the name's exclusivity had been established nearly three decades before. Once attained, plans were set in motion to build a modern underground winery on the family's 500 acres near Geyserville.

Robert Young Estate Winery's first release of 443 cases came in 1997, and was aptly called *Scion* in honor of the descendants of Robert Young. That was soon followed by another nearly 1,000 cases of 1999 Chardonnay that positioned the new winery at a specific level.

In addition to Susan, her sister JoAnn, and brothers Jim and Fred, occupy various positions of responsibility at the winery. JoAnn and Susan handle the hospitality and event duties, while Jim manages Robert Young Vineyards and Fred serves as the driving force behind the winery's development and oversees its operation and growth.

"Starting up the winery allowed all of us to get involved," related Susan Young. "We have always been of the mind that the Alexander Valley had great potential among the finest wine producing areas in California. Now we have a hand in seeing our fruit reach fruition through our wines."

Susan Young also said the Robert Young Estate Winery capacity is around 7,000 cases, and that the company's present production is holding steady to that level.

"We don't really intend to get much bigger," Susan Young recently stated. "Around here, it's all about showcasing our wines, making them the very best they can be. It is all very much a community effort, and everyone has their own part in it."

The "everyone" also included founder Robert Ashley Young, who remained actively involved in many of the winery's ongoing projects until he passed away in 2009 at the age of 90.

Robert Young was considered one of Sonoma's premier community leaders and was given the prestigious **Lifetime Achievement Award** by the *California State Fair* in 2004. This award is but one in a number that has been given to this most active leader of a most lively and vibrant family. Robert Young was instrumental in changing the way growers and vintners work together, and will be remembered

among the world's premier grape growers.

It is fitting that the Robert Young Estate Winery bears his name and that his wines are finally available on a commercial basis. It is the final jewel in a career that has spanned more than four decades and brought both prestige and credit to the California wine industry.



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ROBERT YOUNG ESTATE WINERY

Dear *Platinum Series* Members,

With the blessing of our father, we founded Robert Young Estate Winery in 1997. We were inspired by his passion as a wine grower and decided it was the right time to give it a go. We maintain boutique production levels of each wine we bottle, harvest 100% estate grown fruit, and use premium French oak barrels to age the wine in our cave. Grown, blended, aged, and bottled on our beautiful 450 acre Alexander Valley estate, we are devoted to creating a product that our five generations would be proud to call their own.

We have been making Alexander Valley Chardonnay since our winery was founded. It highlights the Chardonnay clone that is named for our father and has proven to be one of our most consistent wines. We are pleased to introduce our 2011 Alexander Valley Chardonnay. The rich golden color sets the perfect expectations of its complex and concentrated flavors. With incredible tropical aromas of pineapple, guava, and melon and the soft touch of orange blossom and honey on the nose, this wine is approachable and vibrant. The French oak imparts a subtle toasty almond note and creamy vanilla finish.

We sincerely hope you enjoy our 2011 Robert Young Alexander Valley Chardonnay as an expression of our commitment to quality and the land that was passed down to us for generations.

Cheers,

Jim Young
CEO and Owner



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TASTING NOTES

90 POINTS

-*Wine Spectator*

Robert Young's 2011 Alexander Valley Chardonnay follows over a decade of 90+ ratings. Produced from the winery's estate vineyards in the Alexander Valley of Sonoma County, this Chardonnay was made from a special clone that honors Robert Young as one of the great winegrape growing pioneers. Robert Young was among the first to plant French clones of Chardonnay in America, and today, a derivative of those original French clones are named in his honor as *Robert Young Clone #17*. It is a spectacular and distinctive Chardonnay vine that was put to excellent use in this wine. Rich golden in color, the 2011 Alexander Valley Chardonnay opens with incredible tropical aromas of pineapple, guava, Meyer lemon and green melon and soft touches of orange blossom and honey. On the palate, this Chardonnay has complex, concentrated flavors of roasted almonds, creamy nutmeg-spiced vanilla, bright fruit, and a subtle toastiness that lingers on the finish. Aged 14 months in oak. Enjoy now until 2016.

REORDERS

**Robert Young
2011 Alexander Valley
Chardonnay**

Retail Price at the Winery: \$42.00

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